

431, 437

Timbira SO8

/For detailed payments and exchanges of food, small labor services and miscellaneous chores related to the performance of the major festivals, see category 116, pp. 163-230. /

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in front of the house. This is an innovation, for originally boiling was unknown to any of the Timbira, who probably cooked on the spit or in the ashes at the fires by their camp sites. Borrowed from the Neobrazilians along with the cooking pots, these fireplaces are always under the roof. Finally, there is the earth oven (*kíyaéq*), invariably, whether in the village or in an encampment, several meters behind the dwelling and toward the open steppe except for certain special ceremonies, when it must be constructed in front of the houses, at the inner margin of the boulevard. When not in use, the oven appears as an ugly hodge-podge of rocks, dug-up earth, charred logs, leaves, and old mats. It is common to all Timbira tribes.

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The fireplaces of the age classes in the plaza do not serve for the preparation of food.

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If a fire should go out nowadays and there is no neighbor from whom one could borrow a brand, the Indians strike fire with the Neobrazilian strike-a-light consisting of the tip of a cow horn, steel, and flint, with charred cotton for tinder. However, everybody is still familiar with the old drill (*ra'ra*) composed of two urucú staves. The drill itself is about $\frac{1}{2}$ -m. long, somewhat less than a finger's breadth, and terminates in a blunt point. The hearth is about of the same length and somewhat thicker. The pit of the hearth has a lateral groove, which, however, is sometimes lacking. (Fig. 2.) The driller sits down and presses the hearth against the ground with his feet (pl. 5, c). On trips to the plantations or to catch fish in the brook at night it is customary to take along firebrands.

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For blowing the fire into a flame the Indians use a fire fan (*kapé'rëq*), that is, a quadrangular or hexagonal little mat of babassu, anajá, or bacaba palm grass (pl. 12, a). Occasionally it may also serve as a seat, for shoveling away offal, or for covering a pot.

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It is the women's duty to fetch firewood, and usually one will invite another to join her. But should there be a large, dry log that is too heavy, a man will often do the carrying.

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The origin of fire is explained in a myth which I have recorded with only minor variations among the Rámkô'kamekra, Kréyé of Bacabal, Apinayé, and Sérénte.¹⁰⁰

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Special structures.—Apart from ceremonial huts, which are always removed after the festive season, I observed the following structures in Ponto. Somewhat behind and on one side of the house inhabited by the widowed chief Kukrács' and his kinswomen there stood under a roof (*fornyúkwa*; from Portuguese *forno*, roasting pan) a huge copper roasting pan for the preparation of manioc flour; it rested on four wooden legs driven into the ground. The chief had received it as a gift from an Indian friend some twenty-five years ago. It was used by all the villagers, who in return gave the chief some of the flour they prepared. In Pedra

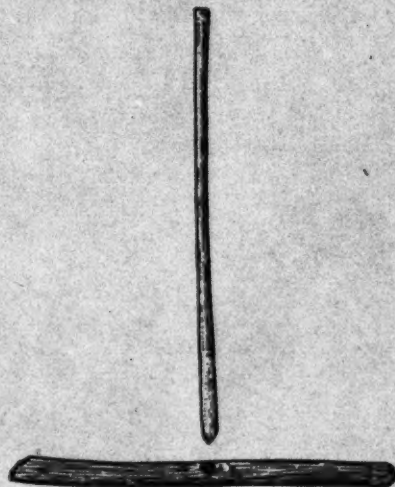


Fig. 2. Fire drill. $\frac{1}{4}$ nat. size.

¹⁰⁰ Nimuendajá, The Apinayé, 154 et seq., 1939.

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 437 Branca (pl. 1, a) the Krahô' had a similar hut, which stood about three hundred
 343 meters behind the circle of houses.

343 Several Indians engaged in pig breeding had erected well-built roofs 2 m. square
 231 under which the beasts could sleep in bad weather if they so chose; they were not
 231 forcibly enclosed there. The tame taitetú pigs always used for ceremonial slaughter
 at certain festivities are kept in cages 1 m. high, which the owners generally put
 up in front of their houses, at the inner margin of the boulevard. A cage consists of
 upright poles roofed with palm fronds.

343 The few Indians who raise fowls keep them behind the dwelling in little gable
 235 roofs resting directly on the ground and constructed of poles, pieces of bark, and
 177 old mats. At night they are barred with pieces of wood. The structure, like the
 poultry itself, was borrowed from the Neobrazilians.

345 The exceptional little stall for strangers which the Apá'nyekra put up in Por-
 171 quinhos has been mentioned (p. 40). No Timbira tribe has a men's or bachelors'
 house corresponding to the warã of the Akwê-Serênte.²² Meetings are held in the
 plaza outdoors, which is also the general sleeping place of the young men.

342 Away from the village the Rãmkô'kamekra, so far as they require any form of
 361 shelter, erect the following forms of hut. If the cultivated plots are far away, a
 hut is put up for the period that requires the owners' presence. Such a structure
 is not erected in the plantation itself, but in the steppe in front of the *galeris*
 forest. Usually it is rectangular and gable-roofed, smaller and less massive than the
 fixed dwellings. However, occasionally the old beehive type (ikré yirôno) occurs—
 a hemispherical form about 1.80 m. in height inside. The framework consists of
 eight or more thin trunks stuck into the ground in a circle and bent together at
 the top, the branches being interlaced into walls, or—rarely—tied together. There
 are no special horizontal hoops. This skeleton is covered round about with palm
 fronds, their tips up, their ribs in vertical position; other fronds are laid on top
 crisscross. This shelter, if carefully set up, is altogether rainproof except for some
 leakage at the bottom. On one side there is left an entrance 1½ m. in height.

Similar, but as a rule less carefully built, are the huts of temporary encamp-
 [462] ments, such as all the steppe Timbira erect when large companies of them are
 hunting or away for some special task. In that case the arrangement of the huts
 is uniformly circular, all doors facing the center, and the female owners observe
 the same order that prevails in the village. These huts are made exclusively by the
 women; even men who camp beyond the settlement without their families never
 erect such structures (pl. 7, a).

174 The question now arises: Did the Timbira originally have only such beehive huts
 342 or did they have larger, substantial dwellings in their fixed villages? Several facts
 361 support the latter alternative. The beehive huts cannot accommodate either the
 regular platform beds or the elevated compartments of the young girls, or an ex-
 tended family. Further, it would be impossible to shelter the boys in a single house
 on the east or west side during the first stage of initiation, for even in 1930 there
 were twice sixteen novices among the Rãmkô'kamekra, and the number was doubt-
 less larger in former times. It would be equally impossible to put up a special cell
 in a beehive hut for one or more boys at the terminal phase of initiation. Moreover,
 a beehive hut could not serve as the meeting place of any of the festive societies,
 with their membership ranging from 15 to 30; and to an even greater extent does
 the vq'te' institution (p. 92) require large houses, for in 1933 the number of men
 who assembled was 54 and 57, respectively. I am convinced that if all these ere-

²² Nimuendaju and Lowie, 408.

Nimuendajá: The Eastern Timbira

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421 A particular tribe, then, owns certain rivulets and creeks with their affluents and the important correlated *galeria* forests; the next creek and its adjacent area, beyond the watershed, belongs to the neighboring tribe. Thus the ancient boundary between the Rãmkô'kamekra and the Apã'nyekra was formed by the watershed between the large Papagaio and Porcos creeks, two affluents of the Rio Corda. The entire district drained by the Flores, a rivulet tributary to the Mearim, belonged to the Čã'kamekra. Beyond the eastern watershed of the Flores lay the land of the Hakapô (=Gamella of Codó). Reduced by wars and epidemics, the Čã'kamekra retreated before the Neobrazilians into the extreme southern corner of their habitat; and when that, too, proved an untenable refuge, they united with the Rãmkô'kamekra, sharing their territory on wholly equal terms.

423 The northern boundary of the Apã'nyekra and Rãmkô'kamekra consisted of the wooded area of the Mearim, to which these steppe dwellers attached no importance, so that the Guajajara were able to settle there.

421 The Mearim divided the Čã'kamekra and Rãmkô'kamekra on its right bank from the Krýé of Bacabal on the left. Originally no Timbira tribe simultaneously occupied both banks of the Tocantins; this was subsequently done by the Krahô', but only because of Neobrazilian pressure. Anyone may hunt, fish, gather, and make a clearing at will within the tribal territory. A plot, so long as it is under cultivation, belongs to the family of the woman for whom the clearing was made. Wild fruit-trees are never privately owned unless they have been deliberately spared in clearing a plot. Fellow tribesmen never quarrel over the exploitation of the tribal area. The endless land disputes among Neobrazilians, often leading to murder or manslaughter, figure as a proof of their malevolence. Snethlage reports that two prominent Rãmkô'kamekra of mature age belonging to complementary moieties had the Indian agent in Barra do Corda smooth out difficulties over a boundary transgression. "I cannot conceive either how such a dispute could have arisen or how the moieties could have been involved, hence I must assume some misunderstanding on this investigator's part."

422 An object belongs to its maker or winner or to the person for whom it was produced or won. For example, a wife not merely owns the utensils manufactured by herself, but also the objects—say, sleeping mats—made for her by her husband; further, the plot and house cleared and erected by the husband or his assistants. Children become owners of the toys made for them by parents and relatives as soon as the objects are handed to them. Proprietary claims of this sort are generally acknowledged to the fullest extent, the solitary exception being the encroachments of a wife's brothers on her husband's private possessions (see p. 125).

422 Except for houses and cultivated plots, private property is markedly unstable. Chattels, even the most valuable of them, such as rifles, bush-knives, axes, iron pots, and arara feathers frequently pass to new owners because of the fees often obligatory on individuals as well as organizations. As shown elsewhere (p. 75), an exaggerated value is attached to tame wild pigs, hence the killing of these animals that regularly recurs during certain festivals involves indemnification of the families which reared them, thus accounting for circulation of considerable property. Another, though rare, occasion for the transfer of many goods is the ceremonial exchange of precentresses when peace is concluded. At the close of the pepyé the families of the new initiates give presents to the two girl associates; in 1933 the elders expressed displeasure with the meagerness of the offerings, whereupon the first commandant of the pepyé stepped up, unbuckled his unused bush-

• Snethlage, Nordostbras. Ind., 168.

431 knife—a Collins 128—stuck in a new leather sheath, and calmly added it to the
 437 gifts. When the *kə'makra* and *atɥ'kmakra* go on a joint hunting trip, the former
 422 give to the latter a bow, whatever is required for shooting, and the knife for cutting
 425 up the game. The killer of a jaguar would exchange weapons with the first com-
 panion summoned by his call, even surrendering a gun for a bow. The tool used by
 the elders in manufacturing the *kokré* log at the close of the ceremonial period is not
 returned to the *vq'tə's* father.

Decorative articles manufactured by special persons for the wearer never remain
 his property, being generally passed on—sometimes after hardly a few minutes'
 use—to his *hapin*. On the other hand, the *kōkrj't* masks become the property of the
 Mummies' "mothers" at the close of the festive period (p. 212). In other instances
 the councillors decide who is to receive the decoration. Thus the *ketúaye* outfit of
 1930 was divided between me and the father of the girl associate, *Iromkré*, for he
 had taken great pains to fulfill his obligations toward his daughter's age-class
moietv; and I had made a contribution for the festival. For the same reason in
 1933 the council bestowed on me the ceremonial lance of the *pepyé* (pl. 31, c, d).

On well-nigh innumerable occasions food or prepared dishes, notably meat pies,
 must be provided. I should have to go through the entire ceremonial to list all the
 instances. The offerings range from an ordinary bowlful of food and the dramatic
 remuneration of the plaza groups by the novices' kinswomen, who set up in front
 of the youths' matrilineal homes carrying baskets (*po*) ostentatiously crammed
 with victuals. The obligations of the King Vultures also may be cited here, as well
 as the history of the *arara* feathers on the lance awarded to the leader of the Clowns.

424 Alienable incorporeal property is unknown. Ceremonial functions are conveyed
 789 gratis by inheritance along with the correlated personal names. All songs are com-
 mon property, to be learnt and sung by anyone willing and able to do so. The Sun
 is addressed in impromptu words, and I have never noted any signs of magical
 formulae.

428 Since prior to contact with civilization the Timbira hardly owned objects of
 [764] permanent value, the rules of inheritance must have been of minor significance.
Snethlage goes so far as to allege (without citing his source) the destruction or
 interment with the corpse of such personal belongings as weapons, tools, and deco-
 ration. Such destruction is unknown to the contemporary *Canella*. If an Indian
 dies without issue, his present heirs are his matrilineal kindred, who for the time
 being take his weapons and ornaments into custody. Two or three days after the
 funeral they put everything on a mat, around which the relatives assemble for a
 lament. The gravedigger also appears and is allowed to pick out one or two items
 from the legacy. Formerly the usage was not to compensate him in this way, but
 with two newly plaited carrying baskets and large, decorated gourd bowls. The
 rest was distributed among the relatives. The dead man's sister's son does not
 receive any special share. On the other hand, they always give the widow some por-
 tion of the inheritance; in decency she, in turn, retaining as she does the cultivated
 plot, will give her mother-in-law a present from the crops raised there. If the de-
 ceased has children, they appropriate everything, irrespective of their sex. A
 woman's house and field, as well as her other belongings, are inherited by her
 daughter; if there is none, her sister or her sister's daughter inherits, never the
 deceased woman's husband or son. Thus, children of both sexes inherit from their
 father, but only a daughter inherits from her mother.

681 Penal law.—Since all the emphasis is on the preservation of intratribal peace,
 622 penal law is little developed. *Ribeiro* says:²²

²² *Memoria*, § 10.

/49 cont. /

126 flour, that all the power of persuasion and even sharp words on the
593 part of her spouse were necessary in order to persuade her to remain
and to continue to work within view of my camera.

846 During a brief visit to all the huts in the village I was able
[123] to ascertain above all the interesting fact of the persistence of the
couvade among the Canella.

[123] /50/ According to the explanation of the chief, who ac-
companied me everywhere, the "man in childbed," who inci-
dentally felt hurt by my indiscreet inquisitiveness and angrily
turned his back on me, had been forced, since the delivery of
his wife on the previous day, to lie down in her place and had to
submit to strict regulations until the umbilical cord of the child
had fallen off. He could not do any work, neither hunt nor fish.
The slightest dietary mistake would result in a disturbance of
the health or in the death of his child.

The mother of a newborn child has no restrictions imposed
upon her, and, usually without suffering from any noticeably un-
pleasant effects after the act of giving birth, she goes about her
normal activities as before. /Fig. 1 appears here. /

123 The impatience of the chief permitted me to linger
scarcely more than a few minutes in each hut.

123 All the ethnographic objects selected by me found their
126 way immediately into the habitation of the chief, who insisted
622 upon returning there as quickly as possible for a rapid conclusion
437 to the business of the exchange.

In the chief's hut there was then a rather stormy scene.

To be sure, the chief agreed to my wish to transport the
collection to Casimba, but he demanded payment in advance, to
which I did not agree.

Angered, some youths picked out their property from the
collection spread out on the floor. Others soon followed their
example and vanished with their possessions.

[152] The chief himself behaved no less furiously.

To show me his deepest contempt, he tore off his state
apparel and hurled it, crumpled, into a dark corner, but calmed
down again immediately when the expected effect on me did not

/50 cont./

123 take place and I, apparently giving up any idea of trade, gave
126 orders to my servant to saddle the animals.

622 Gesticulating excitedly he then spoke persuasively to
437 his dissatisfied people and at the conclusion of his impressive
speech gave me the assurance that I would find all the desired
objects in Casimba the next morning.

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Fig. 1.

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tapering from the middle toward both ends. The one end bears a
pendant of blue arara feathers as decoration. (Fig. 1, 2).

The greatest part of the collection, however, was then missing, only sixteen objects from it remaining for me; they are in the possession of the Berlin kgl. Museum für Völkerkunde. These are:

No. 1. Bow with seven arrows.

The bow (*kuhé*) is made with little care from black palm wood; two meters long, with a flat inner surface and convex outer surface (Fig. 1, 1). The wood of the bow tapers toward the ends, both in the width of the inner surface and in the height diameter. The arrows (*krúa*) consist of thin cane sharpened at one end and at the opposite end are provided with opposed feathering.

No. 2 Dance staff of black, hard wood, with a circular cross-section,

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Bow cross-section.